MASSACRE AT CHICAGO.

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CHICAGO, IN 1812.

NARRATIVE

OF THE

Kinzie, Juliette Augusta (McGill), 1806-1870.

MASSACRE AT CHICAGO,

AUGUST 15, 1812,

AND OF

SOME PRECEDING EVENTS.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little record, taken, many years since, from the lips of those who had been eye-witnesses of the events described, was not designed for publication. It was made simply for the purpose of preserving to the children of the writer a faithful picture of the perilous scenes through which those near and dear to them, had been called to pass. This will excuse many personal and family details which it contains.

At the solicitation of many friends, and to avoid the possibility of its unauthorized appearance in print, the writer has consented to its publication in its original form.

INTRODUCTION.

THE events recorded in the following narrative took place when Chicago was a remote out-post of the American frontier. It could hardly be called a settlement, as the only inhabitants without the Garrison were the family of a gentleman (1) engaged in the fur trade, and the few Canadians or engagés, with their wives and children, who were attached to the same establishment. A wilderness, peopled by savages, extended across the peninsula of Michigan, and the only intercourse between the far-distant posts of Fort Wayne, Detroit, and Chicago, was carried on by such hardy travelers as ventured occasionally to encounter the perils and fatigues of this lonely and hazardous journey. Guided by a devious, Indian trail—encamping at night, beside a stream, or seeking shelter in some hospitable *wigwam*—or even, sometimes, driven by circumstances, to imitate the birds of heaven, and "lodge among the branches;" through difficulties and dangers, such as these, was communication maintained, between places now so easy of access to each other.

The former fort at Chicago, stood upon nearly the same site as the present stockade (1836.) It was differently constructed, however, having two block-houses on the southern side, and on the northern, a sally-port or subterranean passage from the parade-ground to the River. This was designed either to facilitate an escape, in case of emergency, or as a means of supplying the garrison with water, during a siege.

The officers in the fort, at the period of which we write, were Capt. Heald, the commanding officer, Lieut. Helm, and Ensign Ronan—the two last were very young men—and the surgeon, Dr. Van Voorhees. The command

numbered about seventy-five men, very few of whom were effective.

A constant and friendly intercourse had been maintained between these troops and the neighboring Indians. It is true that the principal men of the Pottowattamie Nation went yearly to Fort Malden, in Canada, to receive presents to a large amount, with which the British Government had for many years been in the habit of purchasing their alliance; and it was well-known that many Pottowattamies, as well as Winnebagoes, were engaged with the Ottawas and Shawnees at the Battle of Tippecanoe; yet, as the principal chiefs of all the bands in the neighborhood appeared to be on the most amicable terms with the Americans, no interruption of their harmony was ever anticipated by the whites.

After the 15th of August, however, many circumstances were recollected, which might have opened their eyes, had they not been lulled in fatal security. One instance, in particular, may be mentioned. In the spring preceding the destruction of the Fort, two Indians, of the Calumet band, came to the post, on a visit to the commanding officer. As they passed through the quarters, they saw Mrs. Heald and another lady playing at battledoor. Turning to the interpreter, one of them, *Nau-non-gee*, remarked, "The white chiefs' wives are amusing themselves very much—it will not be long before they are hoeing in our corn fields." (2)

This was considered an idle threat, or, at most, an ebullition of jealous feeling, at the contrast between the situation of their own women and that of the "white chiefs' wives." Some months after, how bitterly was it remembered!

CHAPTER I.

It was the evening of the 7th of April, 1812. The children of Mr. K. were dancing before the fire, to the music of their father's violin. The tea-table was spread, and they were awaiting the return of their mother, who had gone to visit a sick neighbor, about a quarter of a mile up the river. Suddenly their sports were interrupted. The door was thrown open, and Mrs. K. rushed in, pale with terror, and scarcely able to articulate—"The Indians! the Indians!" "What?" "where?" were eagerly demanded. "Up at Lee's place; killing and scalping!" With difficulty Mrs. K. composed herself sufficiently to give the information, "That while she was up at Burns', a man and boy were seen running down with all speed, on the opposite side of the river; that they had called across to give notice to Burns' family to save themselves, for "the Indians" were at Lee's place, from which they had just made their escape." Having given this terrifying news, they had made all speed for the fort, which was on the same side of the river that they then were.

All was now consternation and dismay. The family were hurried into two old *pirogues* that were moored near the house, and paddled with all possible haste across the river, to take refuge in the fort. All that the man and boy, who made their escape, were able to tell was soon known, but in order to render it more intelligible, it is necessary first to describe the scene of action:

Lee's place, since known by the name of Hardscrabble, was a farm, intersected by the Chicago river, about four miles from its mouth. The farm-house stood on the western bank of the South Branch of this river. On the same side of the main stream, but quite near its junction with Lake Michigan, stood the dwelling house and trading establishment of Mr. K. The fort was situated upon the southern

bank, directly opposite this mansion; the river and a few rods of sloping green turf on either side, being all that intervened between them. Here the river turned away suddenly to the south, and pursued a course of half a mile between the beach and a sand-bar lying outside, at which point it joined the Lake—thus leaving the site of the fort a beautiful little peninsula or promontory.

The farm at *Lee's place* was occupied by a Mr. White, and three persons employed by him in the care of the farm. In the afternoon of the day on which our narrative commences, a party of ten or twelve Indians, dressed and painted, arrived at the house, and according to the custom among savages, entered and seated themselves without ceremony. Something in their appearance and manner excited the suspicions of one of the family, a Frenchman, who remarked, "I do not like the looks of these Indians—they are none of our folks. I know by their dress, and paint, that they are not Pottowattamies."

Another of the family, a discharged soldier, then said to the boy who was present, "If that is the case, we had best get away from them, if we can. Say nothing; but do as you see me do."

As the afternoon was far advanced, the soldier walked leisurely toward the canoes, of which there were two, tied near the bank. Some of the Indians inquired where he was going. He pointed to the cattle, which were standing among the haystacks, on the opposite bank, and made signs that they must go and fodder them; and then they should return and get their supper.

He got into one canoe, and the boy into the other. The stream was narrow, and they were soon across. When they had gained the opposite side, they pulled some hay for the cattle; made a show of collecting them; and when they had gradually made a circuit, so that their movements were concealed by the haystacks, they took to the woods, which were close at hand, and made for the fort. They had run about a quarter of a mile, when they heard the discharge of two guns, successively, which they supposed to have been levelled at the companions they had left behind. They stopped not, nor stayed, until they arrived opposite Burns',

where, as before related, they called across to advertise the family of their danger, and then hastened to the fort.

It now occurred to those who had secured their own safety, that the family of Burns was at this moment exposed to the most imminent peril. The question was, who would hazard his own life to bring them to a place of safety? A gallant young officer, Ensign Ronan, volunteered, with a party of five or six soldiers to go to their rescue. They ascended the river in a scow, took the mother of the family, with her infant of scarcely a day old upon her bed, to the boat, in which they carefully conveyed her, and the other members of the family to the fort.

CHAPTER II.

A party of soldiers, consisting of a corporal and six men, had, that afternoon, obtained leave to go up the river to fish. They had not returned when the fugitives from "Lee's place" arrived at the fort, and fearing that they might encounter the Indians, the commanding officer ordered a cannon to be fired to warn them of danger. They were at this time, about two miles above "Lee's place." Hearing the signal, they took the hint, put out their torches, and dropped down the river toward the garrison, as silently as possible. It will be remembered, that the unsettled state of the country since the battle of Tippecanoe, the preceding November, had rendered every man vigilant, and the slightest alarm, was a hint to beware of the Indians.

When the fishing party reached "Lee's place," it was proposed to stop and warn the inmates to be upon their guard, as the signal from the fort indicated danger of some kind. All was still as death around the house. They groped their way along, and as the corporal jumped over the small enclosure, he placed his hand upon the dead body of a man. By the sense of touch he soon ascertained that the head was without a scalp, and otherwise mutilated. The faithful dog of the murdered man stood guarding the lifeless remains of his master. The tale was now told. They retreated to their canoes, and reached the fort unmolested, about eleven o'clock at night. The next morning, a party of citizens and soldiers volunteered to go to "Lee's place," to learn further the fate of the occupants. The body of Mr. White was found pierced by two balls, and with eleven stabs in the breast. The Frenchman, as already described, lay dead, with his dog still beside him. Their bodies were brought to the fort, and buried in its immediate vicinity. It was subsequently ascertained, from traders out in the Indian country, that the perpetrators of this bloody deed, were a party of Winnebagoes, who had come into this neighborhood

determined to "take some white scalps." Their plan had been, to proceed down the river from "Lee's Place," and kill every white man without the walls of the fort. Hearing, however, the report of the cannon, and not knowing what it portended, they thought it best to remain satisfied with this one exploit, and forthwith retreated to their homes on Rock River.

The inhabitants outside the fort, consisting of a few discharged soldiers, and some families of half breeds, now entrenched themselves in the agency-house. This stood on the esplanade, west of the fort, between the pickets and the river, and distant about forty rods from the former.* It was an old-fashioned log-building, with a hall running through the centre, and one large room on each side. Piazzas extended the whole length of the building, in both front and rear. These were planked up for greater security; portholes were cut, and sentinels posted at night. As the enemy were believed to be still lurking in the neighborhood, or, emboldened by former success, likely to return at any moment, an order was issued prohibiting any soldier or citizen from leaving the vicinity of the garrison without a guard. One night, a sergeant and private, who were out on patrol, came suddenly upon a party of Indians, in the pasture adjoining the esplanade. The sergeant fired his piece, and both returned toward the fort. Before they could reach it an Indian threw his tomahawk, which missed the sergeant and struck a wagon standing near. The sentinel from the block-house immediately fired, and with effect, while the men got safely in. The next morning, it was ascertained, from traces of blood to a considerable distance into the prairie, and from the appearance of a body having been laid among the long grass, that some execution had been done. On another occasion, the enemy entered the esplanade to steal the horses. Not finding them in the stable, as they had expected, they made themselves amends for their disappointment by stabbing all the sheep in the stable, and then letting them loose. The poor animals flocked towards the fort—this gave the alarm—the garrison was aroused—parties were sent out, but the marauders escaped unmolested.

* The present site of the light-house.

CHAPTER III.

The inmates of the fort experienced no further alarm for many weeks. On the afternoon of the 7th August, *Winnemeg*, or Catfish, a Pottowattamie chief, arrived at the post, bringing despatches from Gen. Hull. These announced the declaration of war between the United States and Great Britain, and that Gen. H. at the head of the North-Western army, was on his way from Fort Wayne to Detroit; also that the island of Mackinac had fallen into the hands of the British.

The orders to the commanding officer, Capt. Heald, were "to evacuate the post, if practicable, and, in that event, to distribute all the United States' property contained in the fort, and the United States factory or agency, among the Indians in the neighborhood." After having delivered his despatches, *Winnemeg* requested a private interview with Mr. K. who had taken up his residence within the fort. He stated to Mr. K. that he was acquainted with the purport of the communications he had brought, and begged him to ascertain if it were the intention of Capt. Heald to evacuate the post. He advised strongly that such a step should not be taken, since the garrison was well supplied with ammunition, and with provision, for six months—it would, therefore, he thought, be far better to remain until a reinforcement could be sent to their assistance. If, however, Capt. H. should decide upon leaving the post, it should, by all means, be done immediately. The Pottowattamies, through whose country they must pass, being ignorant of the object of *Winnemeg's* mission, a forced march might be made before the hostile Indians were prepared to interrupt them.

Of this advice, so earnestly given, Capt. Heald was immediately informed. He replied that it was his intention to evacuate the post, but that inasmuch as he had received orders to distribute the United States' property, he should not feel justified in leaving until he had collected the Indians

in the neighborhood, and made an equitable division among them. *Winnemeg* then suggested the expediency of marching out and leaving all things standing—possibly, while the savages were engaged in a partition of the spoils, the troops might effect their retreat unmolested. This advice was strongly seconded by Mr. K. but did not meet the approbation of the commanding officer. The order for evacuating the post was read next morning upon parade. It is difficult to understand why Capt. Heald, in such an emergency, omitted the usual form of calling a council of war, with his officers. Perhaps it arose from a want of harmonious feeling between himself and one of his subalterns—Ensign Ronan—a high-spirited, and somewhat overbearing, but brave and generous young man. In the course of the day, finding no council was called, the officers waited upon Capt. Heald, to be informed what course he intended to pursue. When they learned his intention to leave the post, they remonstrated with him upon the following grounds:

First. It was highly improbable that the command would be permitted to pass through the country in safety, to Fort Wayne. For, although it had been said that some of the chiefs had opposed an attack upon the fort, planned the preceding autumn, yet, it was well known, that they had been actuated in that matter by motives of private regard to one family, and not to any general friendly feeling towards the Americans; and that, at any rate, it was hardly to be expected that these few individuals would be able to control the whole tribe, who were thirsting for blood. In the next place: their march must necessarily be slow, as their movements must be accommodated to the helplessness of the women and children, of whom there were a number, with the detachment. That of their small force, some of the soldiers were superannuated and others invalid; therefore, since the course to be pursued was left discretional, their advice was to remain where they were, and fortify themselves as strongly as possible. Succors from the other side of the peninsula might arrive before they could be attacked by the British from Mackinac, and even should there not, it were far better to fall into the hands of the latter, than to become the victims of the savages.

Capt. Heald argued in reply, "that a special order had been issued by the War department, that no post should be surrendered without battle having been given; and that his force was totally inadequate to an engagement with the Indians. That he should, unquestionably, be censured for remaining, when there appeared a prospect of a safe march through, and that upon the whole, he deemed it expedient to assemble the Indians, distribute the property among them, and then ask of them an escort to Fort Wayne, with the promise of a considerable reward upon their safe arrival—adding, that he had full confidence in the friendly professions of the Indians, from whom, as well as from the soldiers, the capture of Mackinac had been kept a profound secret."

From this time, the officers held themselves aloof, and spoke but little upon the subject, though they considered the project of Capt. Heald little short of madness. The dissatisfaction among the soldiers hourly increased, until it reached a high degree of insubordination. Upon one occasion, as Capt. Heald was conversing with Mr. K. upon the parade, he remarked, "I could not remain, even if I thought it best, for I have but a small store of provisions." "Why, captain," said a soldier, who stood near, forgetting all etiquette, in the excitement of the moment, "you have cattle enough to last the troops six months." "But," replied Capt. H. "I have no salt to preserve the beef with." "Then jerk* it," said the man, "as the Indians do their venison."

The Indians now became daily more unruly. Entering the fort in defiance of the sentinels, they made their way without ceremony into the quarters of the officers. On one occasion, an Indian took up a rifle and fired it in the parlor of the commanding officer, as an expression of defiance. Some were of opinion, that this was intended, among the young men, as a signal for an attack. The old chiefs passed backward and forward, among the assembled groups, with the appearance of the most lively agitation, while the squaws rushed to and fro in great excitement, and evidently

* This is done by cutting the meat in thin slices, placing it upon a scaffold and making a slow fire under it, which dries and smokes it at the same time.

prepared for some fearful scene. Any further manifestation of ill-feeling was, however, suppressed for the present, and Capt. Heald, strange as it may seem, continued to entertain a conviction of his having created so amicable a disposition among the Indians, as would ensure the safety of the command, on their march to Fort Wayne.

CHAPTER IV.

Thus passed the time until the 12th August. The feelings of the inmates of the fort, during this time may be better imagined than described. Each morning that dawned seemed to bring them nearer to that most appalling fate—butchery by a savage foe,—and at night they scarcely dared yield to slumber, lest they should be aroused by the war-whoop and tomahawk. Gloom and distrust prevailed, and the want of unanimity among the officers, debarred them the consolation they might have found, in mutual sympathy and encouragement.

The Indians being assembled from the neighboring villages, a council was held with them on the 12th. Capt. H. only, attended on the part of the military. He requested his officers to accompany him, but they declined. They had been secretly informed that it was the intention of the young chiefs to fall upon the officers and massacre them while in council; but they could not persuade Capt. Heald of the truth of their information. They, therefore, only waited until he had left the garrison, when they took command of the block-houses, which overlooked the esplanade, on which the council was held, opened the port-holes, and pointed the cannon so as to command the whole assembly. By these measures, probably, the lives of the whites who were present in council were preserved.

In council, the commanding officer informed the Indians of his intention to distribute among them, the next day, not only the goods lodged in the United States' Factory, but also the ammunition and provisions, with which the garrison was well supplied. He then requested of the Pottowattamies an escort to Fort Wayne, promising them a liberal reward upon their arrival there, in addition to the presents they were now to receive. With many professions of friendship and good-will the savages assented to all he proposed, and promised all he required.

After the council, Mr. K. who understood well, not only the Indian character, but the present tone of feeling among them, waited upon Capt. Heald, in the hope of opening his eyes to the present posture of affairs.

He reminded him, that since the troubles with the Indians upon the Wabash, and its vicinity, there had appeared a settled plan of hostilities towards the whites; in consequence of which, it had been the policy of the Americans to withhold from them whatever would enable them to carry on their warfare upon the defenceless settlers on the frontier. Mr. K. recalled to Capt. H. how that he had himself left home for Detroit, the preceding autumn, and receiving, when he had proceeded as far as De Charme's,* the intelligence of the Battle of Tippecanoe, he had immediately returned to Chicago, that he might despatch orders to his traders to furnish no ammunition to the Indians; all that they had on hand was therefore secreted, and such of the traders as had not already started for their wintering-grounds, took neither powder nor shot with their outfit.

Capt. Heald was struck with the impolicy of furnishing the enemy, (for such they must now consider their old neighbors,) with arms against himself, and determined to destroy all the ammunition, excepting what should be necessary for the use of his own troops.

On the 13th, the goods, consisting of blankets, broadcloths, calicos, paints, etc., were distributed, as stipulated. The same evening, the ammunition and liquor were carried partly into the sally-port, and thrown into a well, which had been dug there to supply the garrison with water, in case of emergency; the remainder was transported as secretly as possible through the northern gate, the heads of the barrels knocked in, and the contents poured into the river. The same fate was shared by a large quantity of alcohol, belonging to Mr. K. which had been deposited in a warehouse near his residence, opposite the fort. The Indians suspected what was going on, and crept, serpent-like, as near the scene of action as possible, but a vigilant watch was kept up, and no one was suffered to approach, but those engaged

* A trading establishment—now Ypsilanti.

in the affair. All the muskets not necessary for the march, were broken up and thrown into the well, together with the bags of shot, flints, gun-screws, etc.

Some relief to the general despondency was afforded by the arrival, on the 14th of August, of Capt. Wells, with fifteen friendly Miamies. Of this brave man, who forms so conspicuous a figure in our frontier annals, it is unnecessary here to say more, than that he had been residing from his boyhood among the Indians, and consequently possessed a perfect knowledge of their character and habits. He had heard, at Fort Wayne, of the order for evacuating Fort Dearborn, and knowing the hostile determination of the Pottowattamies, he had made a rapid march across the country to prevent the exposure of his relative, Capt. Heald, and his troops to certain destruction. But he came "all too late." When he reached the post, he found that the ammunition had been destroyed, and the provisions given to the Indians. There was, therefore, now, no alternative, and every preparation was made for the march of the troops on the following morning.

On the afternoon of the same day, a second council was held with the Indians. They expressed great indignation at the destruction of the ammunition and liquor. Notwithstanding the precautions that had been taken to preserve secrecy, the noise of knocking in the heads of the barrels had too plainly betrayed the operations of the preceding night; and so great was the quantity of liquor thrown into the river, that the taste of the water, the next morning, was, as one expressed it, "strong grog." Murmurs and threats were everywhere heard among the savages. It was evident that the first moment of exposure would subject the troops to some manifestation of their disappointment and resentment.

Among the chiefs were several who, although they shared the general hostile feeling of their tribe towards the Americans, yet retained a personal regard for the troops, at this post, and for the few white citizens of the place. These chiefs exerted their utmost influence to allay the revengeful feelings of the young men, and to avert their sanguinary designs, but without effect.

On the evening succeeding the last council, *Black Partridge*, a conspicuous chief, entered the quarters of the commanding officer. "Father," said he, "I come to deliver up to you the medal I wear. It was given me by the Americans, and I have long worn it, in token of our mutual friendship. But our young men are resolved to imbrue their hands in the blood of the whites. I cannot restrain them, and I will not wear a token of peace while I am compelled to act as an enemy." Had further evidence been wanting, this circumstance would have sufficiently proved to the devoted band the justice of their melancholy anticipations. Nevertheless, they went steadily on with the necessary preparations; and amid the horrors of their situation there were one or two gallant hearts, who strove to encourage in their desponding companions the hopes of escape, that they were far from indulging themselves.

Of the ammunition there had been reserved but twenty-five rounds, besides one box of cartridges, contained in the baggage-wagons. This must, under any circumstances of danger, have proved an inadequate supply, but the prospect of a fatiguing march, in their present ineffective state, forbade their embarrassing themselves with a larger quantity.

CHAPTER V.

The morning of the 15th arrived. All things were in readiness, and nine o'clock was the hour named for starting. Mr. K. had volunteered to accompany the troops in their march, and had entrusted his family to the care of some friendly Indians, who had promised to convey them in a boat around the head of Lake Michigan, to a point* on the St. Joseph's river; there to be joined by the troops, should the prosecution of their march be permitted them.

Early in the morning, Mr. K. received a message from *To-pee-nee-bee*, a chief of the St. Joseph's band, informing him that mischief was intended by the Pottowattamies, who had promised to escort the detachment; and urging him to relinquish his design of accompanying the troops by land, promising that the boat which should contain himself and family should be permitted to pass in safety to St. Joseph's. Mr. K. declined accepting this proposal, as he believed that his presence might operate as a restraint on the fury of the savages, so warmly were the greater part attached to himself and family.

The party in the boat consisted of Mrs. K. and her four younger children, a clerk of Mr. K.'s, two servants, and the boatmen, beside the two Indians who acted as their protectors. The boat started, but had scarcely reached the mouth of the river, when another messenger from *To-pee-nee-bee* arrived, to detain them where they were.

In breathless expectation sat the wife and mother. She was a woman of uncommon energy and strength of character, yet her heart died within her as she folded her arms around her helpless infants, and gazed upon the march of her husband and eldest child to almost certain destruction.

As the troops left the fort the band struck up the Dead

* The spot now called *Bertrand*, then known by the name of *Parc aux Vaches*, from its having been a pasture-ground belonging to an old French fort in that neighborhood.

March. On they came in military array, but with solemn mien. Capt. Wells took the lead, at the head of his little band of Miamies—his face blackened, in token of his impending fate. They took their route along the lake shore. When they reached the point where commences the range of sand-hills, intervening between the prairie and the beach, the escort of Pottowattamies, in number about five hundred, kept the level of the prairie instead of continuing along the beach, with the Americans and Miamies.

They had marched perhaps a mile and a half, when Capt. Wells, who was somewhat in advance, with his Miamies, came riding furiously back.

"They are about to attack us," shouted he, "form instantly, and charge upon them."

Scarcely were the words uttered when a volley was showered from among the sand-hills. The troops were hastily brought into line, and charged up the bank. One man, a veteran of seventy years, fell as they ascended. The remainder of the scene is best described in the words of an eye-witness and participator in the tragedy—Mrs. H. the wife of Capt. (then Lieut.) H., and step-daughter of Mr. K.

"After we had left the bank and gained the prairie, the action became general. The Miamies fled at the outset. Their chief rode up to the Pottowattamies, and said, 'You have deceived the Americans, and us; you have done a bad action, and (brandishing his tomahawk) I will be the first to head a party of Americans, and return to punish your treachery;' so saying, he galloped after his companions, who were now scouring across the prairies.

"The troops behaved most gallantly. They were but a handful, but they resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Our horses pranced and bounded, and could hardly be restrained, as the balls whistled among them. I drew off a little, and gazed upon my husband and father, who were yet unharmed. I felt that my hour was come, and endeavored to forget those I loved, and prepare myself for my approaching fate.

"While I was thus engaged, the surgeon, Dr. V., came up. He was badly wounded. His horse had been shot under him, and he had received a ball in his leg. Every

muscle of his countenance was quivering with the agony of terror. He said to me, 'Do you think they will take our lives? I am badly wounded, but I think not mortally. Perhaps we might purchase our lives by promising them a large reward. Do you think there is any chance?'

"'Dr. V.' said I, "do not let us waste the few moments that yet remain to us, in such vain hopes. Our fate is inevitable. In a few moments we must appear before the bar of God. Let us endeavor to make what preparation is yet in our power.' 'Oh! I cannot die!' exclaimed he, 'I am not fit to die—if I had but a short time to prepare—death is awful!' I pointed to Ensign Ronan, who, though mortally wounded, and nearly down, was still fighting with desperation, upon one knee.

"'Look at that man,' said I, 'at least, he dies like a soldier!'

"'Yes,' replied the unfortunate man, with a convulsive gasp, 'but he has no terrors of the future—he is an unbeliever!'

"At this moment, a young Indian raised his tomahawk at me. By springing aside, I avoided the blow which was intended for my skull, but which alighted on my shoulder. I seized him around the neck, and while exerting my utmost efforts to get possession of his scalping-knife, which hung in a scabbard over his breast, I was dragged from his grasp by another and an older Indian.

"The latter bore me, struggling and resisting, towards the lake. Notwithstanding the rapidity with which I was hurried along, I recognized, as I passed them, the lifeless remains of the unfortunate surgeon. Some murderous tomahawk had stretched him upon the very spot where I had last seen him.

"I was immediately plunged into the water, and held there with a forcible hand, notwithstanding my resistance. I soon perceived, however, that the object of my captor was not to drown me, as he held me firmly in such a position as to place my head above the water. This reassured me, and regarding him attentively, I soon recognized, in spite of the paint, with which he was disguised, *The Black Partridge.*

"When the firing had somewhat subsided, my preserver

bore me from the water, and conducted me up the sand-banks. It was a burning August morning, and walking through the sand, in my drenched condition, was inexpressibly painful and fatiguing. I stooped and took off my shoes, to free them from the sand, with which they were nearly filled, when a squaw seized and carried them off, and I was obliged to proceed without them. When we had gained the prairie, I was met by my father, who told me that my husband was safe, and but slightly wounded. They led me gently back toward the Chicago river, along the southern bank of which was the Pottowattamie encampment. At one time, I was placed upon a horse without a saddle, but soon finding the motion insupportable, I sprang off. Supported partly by my kind conductor, and partly by another Indian, *Pee-so-tum*, who held dangling in his hand, the scalp of Capt. Wells, I dragged my fainting steps to one of the wigwams.

"The wife of *Wau-bee-nee-mah*, a chief from the Illinois River, was standing near, and seeing my exhausted condition, she seized a kettle, dipped up some water from a little stream that flowed near,* threw into it some maple sugar, and stirring it up with her hand, gave it to me to drink. This act of kindness, in the midst of so many atrocities, touched me most sensibly, but my attention was soon diverted to other objects. The fort had become a scene of plunder to such as remained after the troops had marched out. The cattle had been shot down, as they ran at large, and lay dead or dying around. This work of butchery had commenced upon our leaving the fort. I well remembered a remark of Ensign Ronan, as the firing went on. 'Such,' turning to me, 'is to be our fate—to be shot down like brutes!' 'Well, Sir,' said the commanding officer, who overheard him, 'are you afraid?' 'No,' replied the high-spirited young man, 'I can march up to the enemy, where you dare not show your face;' and his subsequent gallant behavior showed this to be no idle boast.

"As the noise of the firing grew gradually less, and the stragglers from the victorious party dropped in, I received

* Just by the present State Street Market, (1844.)

confirmation of what my father had hurriedly communicated in our rencontre on the Lake shore; namely, that the whites had surrendered, after the loss of about two-thirds of their number. They had stipulated for the preservation of their lives, and those of the remaining women and children, and for their delivery at some of the British posts, unless ransomed by traders in the Indian country. It appears that the wounded prisoners were not considered as included in the stipulation, and a horrible scene occurred upon their being brought into camp.

"An old squaw, infuriated by the loss of friends, or excited by the sanguinary scenes around her, seemed possessed by a demoniac ferocity. She seized a stable-fork, and assaulted one miserable victim, who lay groaning and writhing in the agony of his wounds, aggravated by the scorching beams of the sun. With a delicacy of feeling scarcely to have been expected, under such circumstances, *Wau-bee-nee-mah* stretched a mat across two poles, between me and this dreadful scene. I was thus spared, in some degree, a view of its horrors, although I could not entirely close my ears to the cries of the sufferer. The following night, five more of the wounded prisoners were tomahawked."

But why dwell upon this painful scene? Why describe the butchery of the children, twelve of whom, placed together in one baggage-wagon, fell beneath the merciless tomahawk of one young savage? This atrocious act was committed after the whites, twenty-seven in number, had surrendered. When Capt. Wells beheld it, he exclaimed, "Is that their game? Then I will kill, too!" So saying, he turned his horse's head, and started for the Indian camp, near the fort, where had been left their squaws and children.

Several Indians pursued him, firing at him as he galloped along. He laid himself flat, on the neck of his horse, loading and firing in that position. At length, the balls of his pursuers took effect, killing his horse, and severely wounding himself. At this moment he was met by *Winnemeg* and *Wau-ban-see*, who endeavored to save him from the savages who had now overtaken him; but as they supported him along, after having disengaged him from his horse, he re-

ceived his death-blow from one of the party, *(Pee-so-tum,)* who stabbed him in the back.

The heroic resolution of one of the soldiers' wives deserves to be recorded. She had, from the first, expressed a determination never to fall into the hands of the savages, believing that their prisoners were always subjected to tortures worse than death. When, therefore, a party came upon her, to make her prisoner, she fought with desperation, refusing to surrender, although assured of safe treatment; and literally suffered herself to be cut to pieces, rather than become their captive.

From the Pottowattamie encampment, the family of Mr. K. were conveyed across the river to their own mansion. There, they were closely guarded by their Indian friends, whose intention it was to carry them to Detroit for security. The rest of the prisoners remained at the wigwams of their captors.

The following morning, the work of plunder being completed, the Indians set fire to the fort. A very equitable distribution of the finery appeared to have been made, and shawls, ribbons, and feathers were seen fluttering about in all directions. The ludicrous appearance of one young fellow, who had arrayed himself in a muslin gown, and the bonnet of the commanding officer's lady, would, under other circumstances, have afforded matter of amusement.

Black Partridge and *Wau-ban-see*, with three others of the tribe, having established themselves in the porch of the building, as sentinels, to protect the family of Mr. K. from any evil that the young men might be excited to commit, all remained tranquil, for a short space after the conflagration. Very soon, however, a party of Indians from the Wabash made their appearance. These were the most hostile and implacable of all the bands of the Pottowattamies. Being more remote, they had shared less than some of their brethren in the kindness of Mr. K. and his family, and consequently their sentiments of regard for them were less powerful.

Rumors had been sent to the villages, to apprize them of the intended evacuation of the post, as well as of the plan of the Indians assembled, to attack the troops. Thirsting to

participate in such a scene, they hurried on, and great was their mortification, on arriving at the river *Aux Plaines*, to meet with a party of their friends, having their chief *Nee-scot-nee-meg* badly wounded, and to learn that the battle was over, the spoils divided, and the scalps all taken.

On arriving at Chicago, they blackened their faces, and proceeded towards the residence of Mr. K. From his station on the piazza, *Black Partridge* had watched their approach, and his fears were particularly awakened for the safety of Mrs. H. the step-daughter of Mr. K. who had recently come to the post, and was personally unknown to the more remote Indians. By his advice, she was made to assume the ordinary dress of a Frenchwoman of the country, namely, a short gown and petticoat, with a blue cotton handkerchief wrapped around her head; and in this disguise she was conducted by *Black Partridge*, himself, to the house of Ouilmette, a Frenchman with a half-breed wife, who formed a part of the establishment of Mr. K. and whose dwelling was close at hand. It so happened that the Indians came first to this house, in their search for prisoners. As they approached, the inmates, fearful that the fair complexion and general appearance of Mrs. H. might betray her for an American, raised the large feather bed and placed her under the edge of it, upon the bedstead, with her face to the wall. Mrs. Bisson, the sister of Ouilmette's wife, then seated herself with her sewing upon the front of the bed. It was a hot day in August, and the feverish excitement of fear and agitation, together with her position, which was nearly suffocating, were so painful that Mrs. H. at length entreated to be released and given up to the Indians. "I can but die," said she, "let them put an end to my miseries at once." Mrs. Bisson replied, "Your death would be the signal for the destruction of us all, for *Black Partridge* is resolved, if one drop of the blood of your family is spilled, to take the lives of all concerned in it, even his nearest friends, and if once the work of murder commences, there will be no end of it, so long as there remains one white person or half-breed in the country. This expostulation nerved Mrs. H. with fresh resolution. The Indians entered, and she could occasionally see them from her hiding-place, gliding about and

inspecting every part of the room, though without making any ostensible search, until, apparently satisfied that there was no one concealed, they left the house. All this time, Mrs. Bisson kept her seat upon the side of the bed, calmly assorting and arranging the patchwork of the quilt on which she was engaged, although she knew not but that the next moment she might receive a tomahawk in her brain. Her self-command unquestionably saved the lives of all present.

From Ouilmette's they proceeded to the dwelling of Mr. K. They entered the parlor, in which were assembled the family, with their faithful protectors, and seated themselves upon the floor, in profound silence.

Black Partridge perceived, from their moody and revengeful looks, what was passing in their minds, but he dared not remonstrate with them. He only observed in a low tone to *Wau-ban-see*, "We have endeavored to save our friends, but it is in vain—nothing will save them now." At this moment a friendly whoop was heard from a party of new comers, on the opposite bank of the river. *Black Partridge* sprang to meet their leader, as the canoes in which they had hastily embarked touched the bank, demanding, "Who are you?" "A man—who are *you?*"

"A man, like yourself—but tell me *who* you are?"—meaning, tell me your disposition, and which side you are for.

"I am the *Sau-ga-nash!*" "Then make all speed to the house—your friend is in danger, and you only can save him!"

Billy Caldwell, for it was he, entered the parlor with a calm step, and without a trace of agitation in his manner. He deliberately took off his accoutrements, and placed them with his rifle, behind the door; then saluted the hostile savages.

"How now, my friends! A good day to you. I was told there were enemies here, but I am glad to find only friends. Why have you blackened your faces? Is it that you are mourning for the friends you have lost in the battle? (purposely misunderstanding this token of evil designs,) or, is it that you are fasting? If so, ask our friend here, and he will give you to eat. He is the Indians' friend, and never yet refused them what they had need of.

Thus taken by surprise, the savages were ashamed to acknowledge their bloody purpose; they, therefore, said modestly, that they came to beg of their friend some white cotton, in which to wrap their dead, before interring them. This was given them, together with some other presents, and they took their departure from the premises.

Little remains to be told. On the third day after the battle, the family of Mr. K. with the clerks of the establishment, (3) were put in a boat, under the care of François, a half-breed interpreter, and conveyed to St. Joseph's, where they remained until the following November, under the protection of *To-pee-nee-bee's* band. They were then carried to Detroit, under the escort of Chandonnai, and a trusty Indian friend,* and, together with their negro servants, delivered up, as prisoners of war, to the British commanding officer. It had been a stipulation, at the surrender of Detroit, by Gen. Hull, that the American inhabitants should retain the liberty of remaining undisturbed in their own dwellings, and accordingly, this family was permitted a quiet residence among their friends at that place. Mr. K. was not allowed to leave St. Joseph's with his family, his Indian friends insisting upon his remaining to endeavor to secure some remnant of his scattered property, but anxiety for his family induced him to follow them to Detroit, in January, where he was received as a prisoner, and paroled by Gen. Proctor.

Of the other prisoners, Capt. and Mrs. Heald had been sent across the Lake to St. Joseph's the day after the battle. Capt. Heald had received two wounds, and Mrs. H. seven, the ball of one of which was cut out of her arm with a penknife, by Mr. K. after the engagement. (4)

Lieut. Helm, who was likewise wounded, was carried by some friendly Indians to their village, on the *Au Sable*, and thence to St. Louis, where he was liberated, by the intervention of Mr. Thomas Forsyth, a trader among them.

Mrs. Helm accompanied her father's family to Detroit. In the engagement she received a slight wound on the ancle, and had her horse shot under her.

The soldiers, with their wives and children, were dispersed

* *Kee-po-tah.*

among the different villages of the Pottowattamies, upon the Illinois, Wabash, Rock River, and Milwaukie, until the following spring, when they were for the most part carried to Detroit, and ransomed. Some, however, were detained in captivity still another year, during which period they experienced more kindness than was to have been expected from an enemy in most cases so merciless.

NOTES.

(1) This gentleman removed his establishment from St. Joseph's to Chicago as early as the year 1804. He was universally beloved among the Indians, who gave to him the name of *Shaw-nee-au-kee*, or the Silver-man, from the circumstance of his furnishing them with the brooches, earrings, and other ornaments of that metal, with which they decorate their persons. His influence over the Pottowattamies, Kickapoos, Winnebagoes, and Ottowas, among which tribes his trading-posts were dispersed, was so great as to render him an object of dread and suspicion to the British, during the last war with America. After various unsuccessful attempts they finally succeeded in making him prisoner, and retaining him in captivity until the close of the war.

(2) This was the principal chief of the Calumet village, and the particulars of his death, as afterwards given by some of his band, are not unworthy of record. During the battle on the 15th of August, the chief object of his attack was one Sergeant Hays, a man from whom he had received many acts of kindness. After Hays had received a ball through the body, this Indian ran up to tomahawk him, when the sergeant, collecting his remaining strength, pinned him through the body with his bayonet. They fell together. Other Indians, running up, despatched Hays, and it was not until then that his bayonet was extricated from the body of his adversary. The wounded chief was carried, after the battle, to his village on the Calumet, where he survived several days.

Foreseeing his approaching end, he called together his young men, and enjoined them in the most solemn manner, to respect the safety of their prisoners, after his death, and to take the lives of none of them, from respect to his memory, as he deserved his fate, from the hands of those whose kindness he had so ill-requited.

(3) Along with the party was a non-commissioned officer, who had made his escape in a singular manner. As the troops were about leaving the fort, it was found that the baggage-horses of the surgeon had strayed off. The quarter-master sergeant, Griffith, was sent to collect them, and bring them on, it being absolutely necessary to recover some part of the surgeon's apparatus, and medicines for the march. This man had been for a long time on the sick report, and for this reason, was given the charge of the baggage, instead of being in his place with the troops. His efforts to recover the horses being unsuccessful, he was hastening to rejoin his party, alarmed at some appearance of disorder among the Indians, when he was met and made prisoner by *To-pee-nee-bee.* Having taken from him his arms and accoutrements, the Pottowattamie put him into a canoe, and paddled him across the river, bidding him make for the woods and secrete himself. This he did, and the following day, in the afternoon, seeing from his lurking-place that all appeared quiet, he ventured to steal cautiously into the garden of Ouilmette, where he concealed himself behind some currant bushes. After a time, he determined to enter the house, and accordingly climbed up, through a small back-window, into the room where the family were. This was just as the Wabash Indians had left the house of Ouilmette for that of Mr. K. The danger of the sergeant was now imminent. The family of Ouilmette stripped him of his uniform, and arrayed him in a suit of deer-skin, with belt, moccasins, and pipe, like a French *engagé.* His dark complexion and large black whiskers favored the disguise. The family were all ordered to address him in French, and although utterly ignorant of the language, he continued to pass for a *voyageur*, and as such, to accompany Mr. K. and his family, undiscovered by his enemies, to St. Joseph's.

(4) The horse Mrs. Heald rode was a fine, spirited animal, and the Indians were desirous to possess themselves of it unwounded. They therefore aimed their shots so as to disable the rider, without injuring her steed. This was at length accomplished, and her captor was in the act of disengaging her hat from her head, in order to scalp her, when young *Chandonnai*, a half breed from St. Joseph's, ran up,

and offered for her ransom a mule he had just taken, adding the promise of ten bottles of whiskey, so soon as he should reach his village. The latter was a strong temptation. "But," said the Indian, "she is badly wounded—she will die—will you give me the whiskey at all events?" *Chandonnai* promised that he would, and the bargain was concluded. Mrs. Heald was placed in the boat with Mrs. K. and her children, covered with a buffalo robe, and enjoined silence as she valued her life. In this situation the heroic woman remained, without uttering a sound that could betray her to the savages, who were continually coming to the boat in search of prisoners, but who always retired peaceably, when told that it contained only the family of *Shaw-nee-aukee*. When the boat was at length permitted to return to the mansion of Mr. K. and Mrs. Heald was removed to the house, for the purpose of dressing her wounds, Mr. K. applied to an old chief who stood by, and who, like most of his tribe, possessed some skill in surgery, to extract a ball from the arm of the sufferer. "No, father," replied he, "I cannot do it—it makes me sick here!" placing his hand upon his heart. This, after the bloody scenes in which he had just participated!

Capt. Heald was taken prisoner by an Indian from the Kankakee, who had a strong personal regard for him, and who, when he saw the wounded and enfeebled state of Mrs. H. released his prisoner, that he might accompany his wife to St. Joseph's. To the latter place they were accordingly carried by *Chandonnai* and his party. In the meantime, the Indian, who had so nobly released his prisoner, returned to his village on the Kankakee, where he had the mortification of finding that his conduct had excited great dissatisfaction among his band. So great was the displeasure manifested that he resolved to make a journey to St. Joseph's and reclaim his prisoner. News of his intention being brought to *To-pee-nee-bee* and *Kee-po-tah*, under whose care the prisoners were, they held a private council with *Chandonnai*, Mr. K. and the principal men of the village, the result of which was a determination to send Capt. and Mrs. Heald to the island of Mackinac, and deliver them up to the British. They were accordingly put in a bark canoe and paddled by

the present chief of the Pottowattamies, *Robinson*, and his wife, a distance of three hundred miles along the coast of Lake Michigan, and surrendered as prisoners of war, to the commanding officer at Mackinac.

As an instance of the procrastinating spirit of Capt. Heald, it may be mentioned, that even after he had received certain intelligence that his Indian captor was on his way from the Kankakee to retake him, he would still have delayed another day at St. Joseph's, to make preparation for a more comfortable journey to Mackinac.

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